



**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

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**to  
COUNCIL  
12 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**RESPONSE TO ESSEX TRANSPORT STRATEGY PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To present to Council for approval the Maldon District Council recommended consultation response to the draft Essex Transport Strategy.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approves the consultation response to the Essex Transport Strategy (**APPENDIX 1**) and submits the response online by the deadline.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Essex County Council (ECC) launched the Essex Transport Strategy public consultation on 5 August 2024 for six weeks to 22 September 2024. The Essex Transport Strategy is ECC's Statutory Plan also known as their Local Transport Plan (LTP). This will be their Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) replacing the current LTP3 published in 2011.
- 3.2 This public consultation seeks a response on 'Part 1' only that is the 'Framework' of the draft Essex Transport Strategy. This Framework focusses on the 'Themes', 'Outcomes' and 'Activities', and ECC's new 'Place and Movement Approach' to road hierarchy. The consultation response is to ECC's accompanying online consultation questionnaire. The draft response to 'Part 1 – the Framework' is set out in **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.3 The recommended consultation response is due to be presented to the Planning Policy Working Group for discussion and input on 10 September 2024. The Council will be informed of any feedback not covered by the recommended response in a Members' Update to this report.
- 3.4 'Part 2' of the Essex Transport Strategy public consultation will be early in 2025 setting out 'Area Plans' with a full programme of planned investment on these 'Part 1' ideas in specific areas of Essex.
- 3.5 ECC's Strategy, as a statutory plan, will be approved by the Secretary of State for Transport at the Department of Transport (DfT). The Essex Strategy will underpin regional strategy set out in Transport East Strategy 2023. ECC and Maldon District Council (MDC) as subscribing members of Transport East are represented at regional level for transport matters of challenge and opportunity. The four priorities of the Transport East Strategy to 2050 are: Decarbonising Transport, Connecting growing places, Energised coastal and rural communities, and Global gateways.

3.6 Transport East published 'Rural Connections: *Transport challenges and opportunities for communities in the East*' in March 2024 setting out the challenges faced by a region with a large rural and rural coastal population for: access to health and essential services, access to education and training, access to employment, social isolation, wellbeing, and social mobility. The Council contributed to the evidence gathering that highlights barriers faced by transport users, operational challenges as well as the impact on the visitor economy and achieving decarbonisation targets for transport. Regional strategy overarches county strategy.

### 3.7 Relationship to Draft Maldon District Future Transport Strategy

3.7.1 The Council will be aware of the partnership working with ECC, as the Highway Authority, preparing the draft Maldon District Future Transport Strategy (dMDFTS). This is the first District-wide transport strategy prepared in Essex.

3.7.2 An All-Member Briefing took place on the dMDFTS on 2 September 2024 led by Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport with the ECC Project Team. The Briefing set out the importance of the dMDFTS as an 'Area Plan' overarched by an Essex Transport Strategy. As referenced in paragraph 3.4. above 'Area Plans' will form the basis of a full programme of planned investment in specific areas of Essex within 'Part 2' of the Essex Transport Strategy preparation and further consultation by early 2025.

3.7.3 The baseline data from Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the 2021 Census has informed the travel behaviours identified, challenges and issues in the District highlighting high dependency on car use, the poor connections to strategic road (A12) and strategic rail (Great Eastern Mainline) networks and the lack of alternatives to car use with poor public transport, especially bus services in the rural, coastal areas to access health, education, shopping and employment.

3.7.4 The response has taken account of the known differences in transport services and connections to and from our rural, coastal District when compared to those in urban centres in Essex like the Colchester and Chelmsford cities and large towns like Braintree and Basildon plus the regional connections by strategic road and strategic rail networks to ports and airports supporting our businesses.

## 4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The recommended response to the Essex Transport Strategy consultation is representative of the significant transport challenges and needs in the District set out in evidence in local, county and regional strategy and the opportunity through the local dMDFTS, county-wide Essex Transport Strategy and regional Transport East Strategy for future significant transport improvements in the District as a rural, coastal authority.

4.2 The Essex Transport Strategy '*seeks to:*

- *understand travel needs in Essex*
- *raise awareness of travel choices*
- *enable sustainable travel choices*

*It looks at the opportunities and challenges we face for future investment in transport, working with Central Government and other partners to determine which transport schemes are priority and unlock funding for them. The 3 Themes will deliver the transport network Essex needs with the Outcomes being:*

- *Transport Choice*
- *Increased Safety*
- *Strong resilient Network*
- *Supporting residents and businesses*

4.3 This consultation on the Essex Transport Strategy 'Framework' coincides with proposed changes to the National planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation. The response to the proposed NPPF changes has its own report on this same agenda.

## **5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027**

### **5.1 Enhancing and connecting our place**

5.1.1 Responding to the Essex Transport Strategy will ensure the Council can influence county strategy for setting transport priorities in Essex, which will impact the District's connectedness.

### **5.2 Helping the economy to thrive**

5.2.1 Responding to the Essex Transport Strategy will ensure the Council can influence county strategy for setting transport priorities in Essex, which will impact the District, including tackling issues of congestion, facilitating freight movement which impact local businesses and visitors reaching historic towns, the coast and countryside to support the local tourism economy.

### **5.3 A greener future**

5.3.1 Responding to the Essex Transport Strategy will ensure the Council has the opportunity to influence county strategy for setting sustainable transport priorities in Essex, which will mitigate climate change by reducing GGEs (Greenhouse Gas Emissions) to decarbonise transport, including tackling issues of EV (Electric Vehicles) charging, good public transport provision, as well as walking and cycling improvements.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The connectedness of the District affects residents, businesses, and visitors. Investment is needed to ensure rural, coastal, and urban areas within the District are better connected, as well as connected to places outside the District for shopping, education, and health.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The consultation response highlights where there are inequalities between urban and rural communities in the District to improve access to services, economic and social connections.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – The ability to influence change in the District's connectedness, movement and congested areas provides risks and opportunities to other council projects including the Local Development Plan and its review.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.

(v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.

Background Papers:

Transport East Strategy, March 2023 [Transport Strategy - Transport East](#)

Rural Connections: *Transport challenges and opportunities for communities in the East*,

Transport East, March 2024 [JFG6592 TransportEastReport\\_AW-WEB.pdf](#)

Essex Transport Strategy Part 1 Consultation Document [Essex Transport Strategy - Essex County Council - Citizen Space](#)

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